

North Saint Paul Parking Analysis

Research Objectives

The city of North Saint Paul desires to increase the number of visitors to its downtown areas, including those who come by car, bike, foot, or public transit.

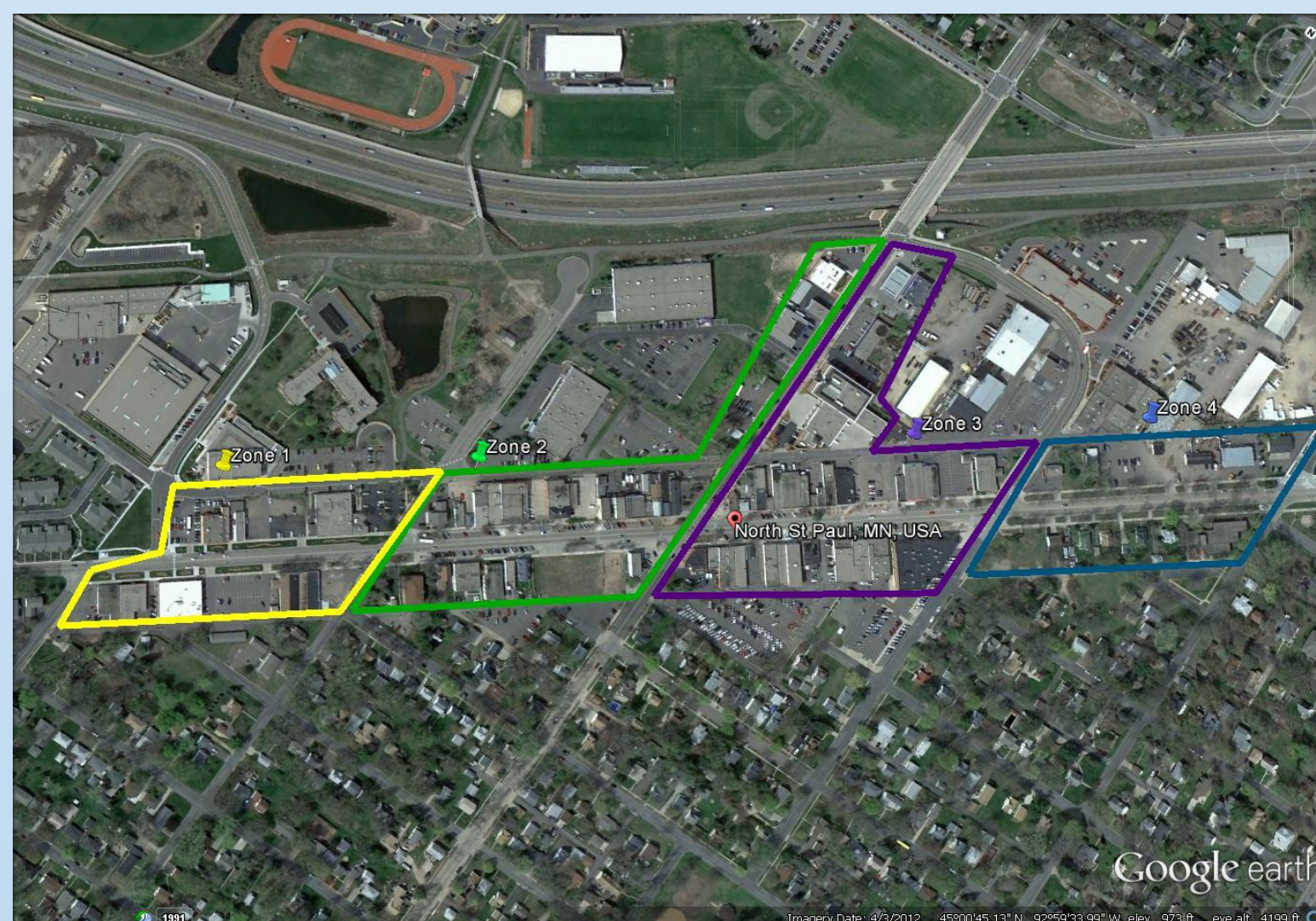
This research aims to benefit the residents of North Saint Paul and its downtown visitors by providing the following:

- An inventory of current parking supply and demand
- An estimate of future parking supply and demand
- Identification of best parking practices for downtown/retail districts
- Recommendations for parking modifications

Methodology

The student team used the following methods to meet the research objectives:

- **Literature Review** of three comprehensive resources that provided a diverse sample of real examples and applications of parking management and wayfinding.
- **Parking Inventory** of available parking spaces in the downtown area.
- **Surveys** of business owners, employees, residents of, and visitors to the downtown area.



For the parking inventory, Downtown North Saint Paul was split into four zones with 176 parcels. Front and back parking in each parcel was rated on a scale of 0-3 in three categories: Safety, Lighting, and Convenience.

This project was completed as part of PA 5511: Community Economic Development, a course at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs, with support from the Resilient Communities Project (RCP). RCP is an initiative of the Sustainability Faculty Network at the University of Minnesota, with funding and administrative support provided by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) and the Institute on the Environment (IonE). To learn more, visit rcp.umn.edu.

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Findings



Photo by Kallen Hayes

The least amount of parking is in the heart of downtown, on the corner of 7th Ave and Margaret St.

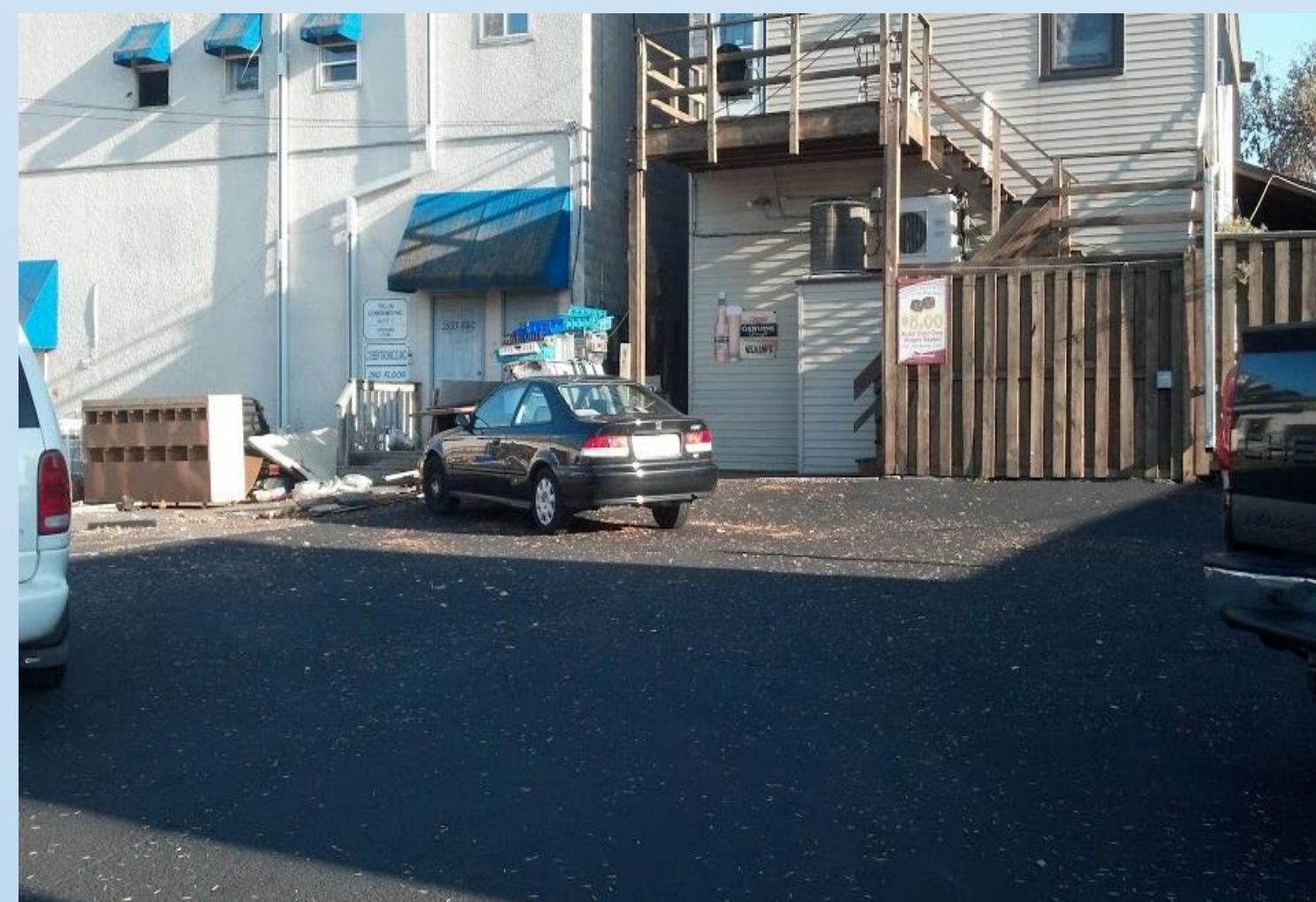
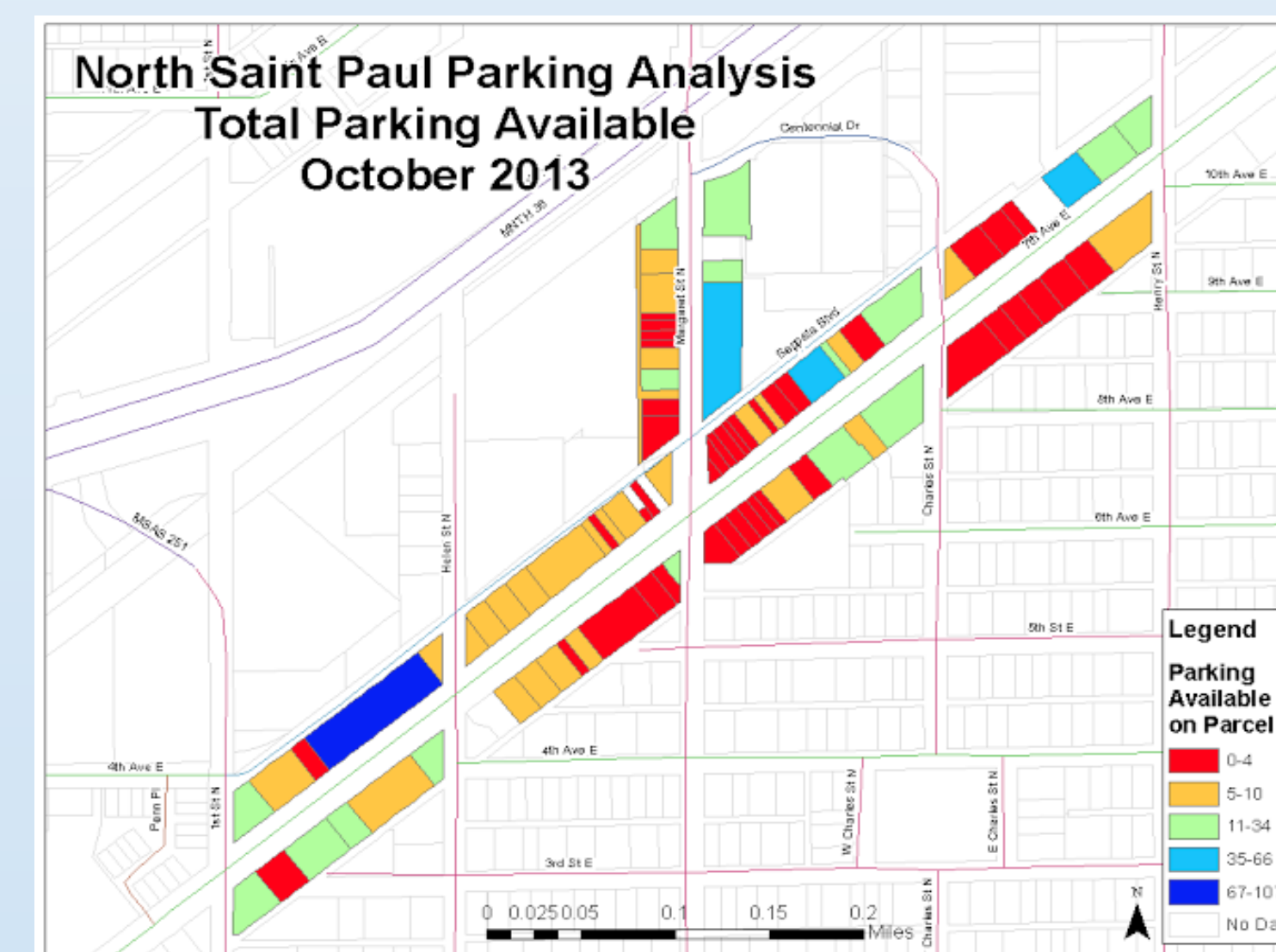


Photo by Kallen Hayes

Angled parking is perceived as unsafe by residents and visitors. People do not feel safe backing out of spaces when they cannot see oncoming traffic. Some residents also commented on the inconsistencies of timing restrictions on these parking spots, specifically how 2-hour parking limits seem haphazard.

Parking in the downtown district is not sufficient to meet demand but the inclusion of additional parking lots outside of the study area does provide sufficient parking.

There are a handful of mid to large-sized parking lots located adjacent to the study area parcels that provide additional supply. However, not all of these lots are clearly labeled as public and lack appropriate access and wayfinding to businesses in the downtown district.



Map by Lexi Prah

Parking spaces available in the rear of parcels are less visible, not clearly marked, or inadequately lit. Many patrons are unaware of additional parking in the rear of businesses. Those that are aware perceive these spaces as less safe and less accessible.

This photo was taken of a parking spot located at the rear of a parcel. On a scale of 1-3 with 3 being a high score, this spot received a rating of 1 in the categories of Safety, Lighting, and Convenience on our parking inventory.

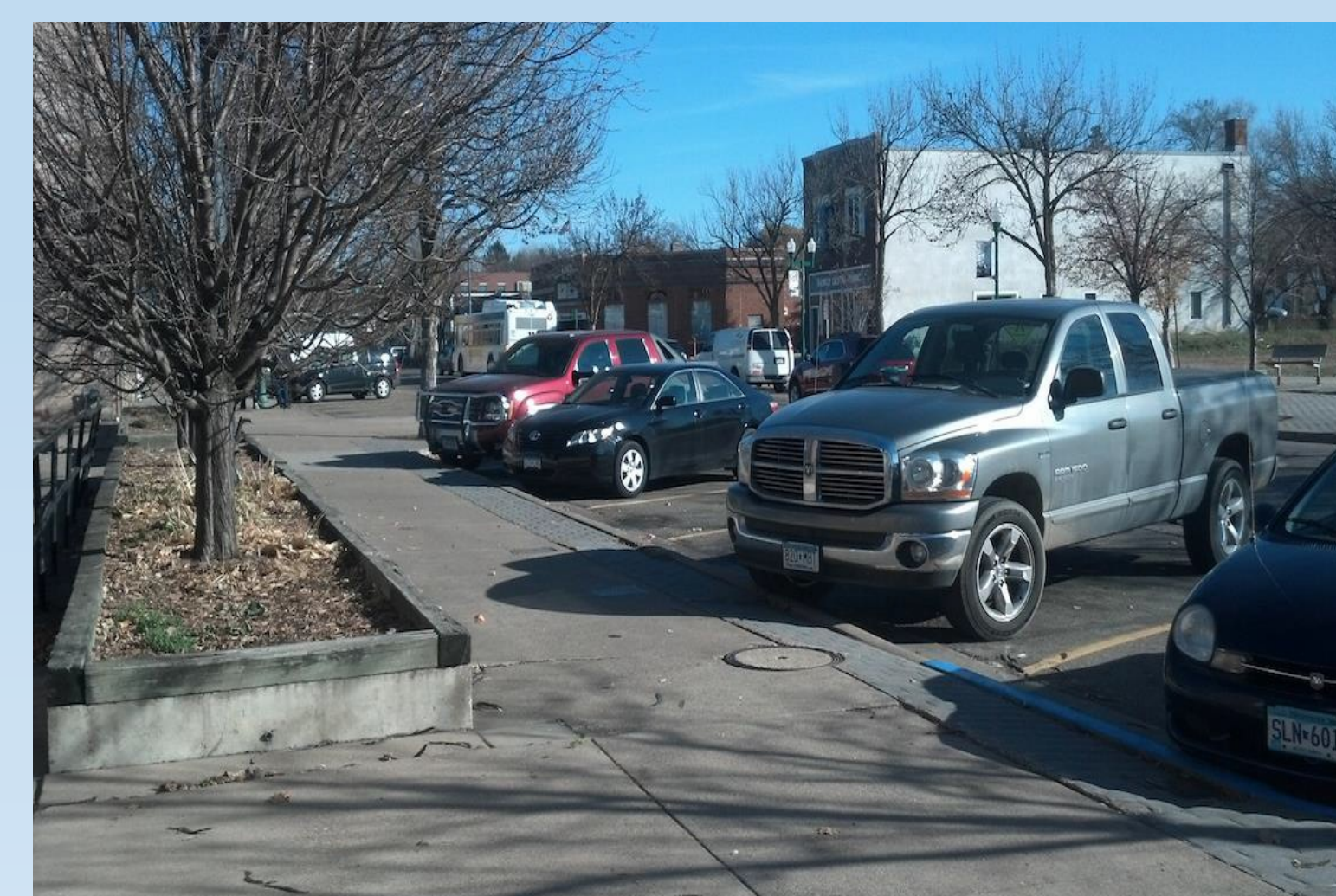


Photo by Kallen Hayes

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to increase the number of visitors to downtown North Saint Paul:

1. Transit

- Encourage and promote public transportation.
- Provide more bike racks and a centrally located bike servicing station to encourage bicycling.
- Provide maps and directories of the downtown area to enhance walkability.

2. Improve 45-degree angled parking

- Implement a compact-car-only policy at eastern ends of 45-degree angled parking along 7th Avenue to improve visibility of oncoming traffic.

3. Safety

- Increase lighting in parking areas and on sidewalks to improve visibility and sense of safety.
- Control pedestrian access by providing proper wayfinding and maintained sidewalks from rear to front of businesses.

4. Wayfinding

- Design a directory that can be used throughout the downtown area, with one on each block, indicating a visitor's location with a "You are here" symbol.
- Provide clear information about the location of available parking lots for major events.
- Erect signage for pedestrians/cyclists on the Gateway bike trail to direct them toward downtown amenities.

5. Enforcement

- Improve enforcement to increase the effectiveness of parking regulations, increase turnover and availability of prime parking spaces, and increase revenue.

6. Expansion

- Expand 2-hour parking to all spaces on 7th Ave and Margaret St to increase turnover.
- Mandate employee parking in rear of buildings to make prime on-street parking in front of businesses available for patrons and visitors.
- Expand actual supply by constructing a parking ramp, discussed in North Saint Paul's Redevelopment Master Plan, that can provide spillover parking during events.